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SUBJECT: SPEAKER EVALUATION: DR. JOHANNA MENDELSON FORMAN  
DISCUSSES BIOFUELS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

¶1. Summary: The below is an evaluation of a recent speaker series held September 17-18 on the development of biofuels and the diversification of energy sources in the Dominican Republic. End Summary.

¶2. A. Name, date: CSIS Biofuel Speaker from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Dr. Johanna Mendelson Forman in the Dominican Republic September 16-18.

¶3. B. Summary of venues/audiences: Public Affairs Santo Domingo in collaboration with the Embassy,s Economic Section programmed Dr. Johanna Mendelson Forman for two full days in Santo Domingo to address the development of biofuels as an alternative energy source in the Dominican Republic. This speaker series was scheduled as part of the U.S.-Brazil Biofuels Initiative signed in March 2007, which identified the Dominican Republic as one of four target countries for assistance in developing biofuels industries.

¶4. On Monday, September 17, Dr. Johanna Mendelson Forman met with leading senior economic journalists from the country,s three major newspapers.

¶5. In mid-afternoon Dr. Mendelson Forman participated in a local radio program (CDN En La Comunidad). Further information on both these events appears below.

¶6. In the evening Dr. Mendelson Forman spoke to a standing room audience of some 180 at the Technological Institute of Santo Domingo (INTEC), a leading private university. In the audience were the University,s rector, deans and professors and students from the university,s Alternative Energy Masters Program, as well as undergraduate and graduate engineering students. After Dr. Mendelson Forman,s presentation, students, faculty, and experts on alternative energy participated in a 40-minute question and answer session, where she further explained what the biofuels agreement between the US and Brazil was all about, how it would help nations like the DR and the technical training that could be made available through the US/Brazilian governments.

¶7. On Tuesday, September 18, Dr. Mendelson Forman met at the Ambassador,s residence with key representatives from the country,s business and government sectors involved in the development of alternative energy sources. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, the National Energy Commission, the Brazilian Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, the U.S. Embassy Charge d, Affaires as well as representatives from leading business and civil society groups.

¶8. On Tuesday evening, the biofuels expert addressed a standing-room only event at the National Energy Commission.

Some 60 alternative energy experts and interested parties were present, including the chairman of the Commission on Energy and Mines from the Chamber of Deputies, two members of the Chamber of Deputies and two senators from the Senate, the Energy Commission. Also present: the executive board of the National Energy Commission, representatives from the engineering department of the National Autonomous University, professors and various experts in the field. Dr. Mendelson Forman answered a series of questions regarding her presentation.

¶9. C. Effectiveness of speaker: Dr. Mendelson Forman's presentation and responses to questions reflected a well-researched, academic perspective on the future of biofuels. The speaker was able to clearly convey the message that this industry could have a positive impact in diversifying the Dominican Republic's energy sources while fostering economic growth and creating thousands of much-needed jobs. She always stressed the DR's advantageous positioning in the region, including the opportunities available under the DR-CAFTA agreement. She communicated clearly in Spanish and framed her arguments in ways that made a convincing case. Her conclusions were clear for the Dominican audiences, and they came through clearly in the press reports generated by her visit.

¶10. She was a collegial and generous companion, a natural speaker, and we would highly recommend her for similar programs elsewhere, particularly in Spanish speaking countries.

¶11. D. Quality of IIP support: Special thanks to program officers Gretchen Christison and Camille Barone for their superb support in locating this speaker and keeping the process moving.

¶12. E. Results: Public Affairs hosted Dr. Joanna Mendelson Forman from CSIS, September 17-18, for a series of programs with private sector, academic and government audiences in Santo Domingo. Her speaker series was aimed at raising awareness about the potential for biofuels development in the Dominican Republic to diversify its energy sources and reduce its dependence on imported oil. She spoke about the benefits of the biofuels industry in developing economies and effectively argued that the DR must create the proper regulatory framework and financial incentives to encourage the development of the industry. Dr. Mendelson Forman also emphasized the need to dedicate resources to educate the population. In addition, Dr. Mendelson Forman stressed that the DR must work with Haiti in order to create jobs and better living conditions on both sides of the island. Embassy representatives from EcoPol and USAID joined the visiting speaker at the various venues where she participated. In short, Dr. Mendelson Forman reached a wide audience via her media appearances and newspaper articles, but also influenced key opinion makers and leaders through her program.

¶13. Dr. Mendelson Forman participated in one nationally transmitted radio program on CDN (92.5FM) and was interviewed by journalists from three daily newspapers, resulting in 6 articles as of September 18. Headlines for some of the stories: &(U.S. Expert) Says It Is Possible to Create Biofuel from Jatropha8 Hoy 9/18); &DR Amongst Nations to Receive Foreign Aid for Renewable Energy8 (Diario Libre, 9/18); US Believes the DR Has Potential for Biofuel (Listn Diario 9/18); &(Speaker) Points Out Economic Advantages for Ethanol Production in the DR8 (HOY, 09/20).

¶14. On Tuesday, September 18, her presentation at the National Energy Commission appeared in the evening news of the following national channels (7,9,13/27,15).

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